

# Active Reading Strategies

## Make Connections

Reading is more than just knowing what you read; it is also about feeling and connecting with the text. What you feel about the story is just as important as what you remember. Good readers often have strong feelings about what they read, both positive and negative. They are engaged in what they are reading.

How do I do it?

1. Stop while you are reading and ask yourself what you are feeling about the story, about the characters, and about what is happening.
2. Try putting yourself in the place of one of the characters and ask: what would I feel or do if I were this character?
3. Does this story remind you of:
  - a. Something happening in the world today (text to world)
  - b. Something that has happened in your life (text to self)
  - c. Something that you have learned or read about in a book, TV show, or movie (text to text/media)

## Ask Questions

Asking questions while you are reading is an effective reading strategy because it keeps you active and purposeful while you read. It also propels readers forward into deeper understanding. Readers ask questions to:

- construct meaning
- enhance understanding
- find answers or definitions
- acquire more information
- discover new information
- clarify confusion

How do I do it?

1. Before you begin reading stop and ask questions that you might find answer to in your reading.
2. As you read stop once and a while to see if your questions are being answered in the reading, if you are confused about anything or if you have additional questions you are wondering about.

## Visualize

Visualizing is a reading strategy in which you create a mental image or scene in your head about what you have just read to help you remember and understand the text.

How do I do it?

1. Stop at significant points while you are reading and visualize a strong image or mental picture about what you have just read.
2. You may need to reread the passage to gather all the descriptions.
3. Sometimes it is helpful to close your eyes and imagine that you are there in the story.
4. Sometimes your image will have lots of detail and will be about one thing, and sometimes it will be like a movie and show a sequence of events that happened, with sound and action included.

## Predict / Infer

An inference is an educated guess based on what is already known. Readers can make educated guesses or appropriate inferences about underlying themes in the text or predictions about what is to come. Act like a detective and use the clues from the story to figure out what is going to happen next or what is happening.

How do I do it?

1. Before or as you read stop every once in a while and think about what has happened so far in the story.
2. Then, make a prediction about what you think is likely to happen next.
3. You may also draw a conclusion about a character or event based on information given from the text, the book or chapter titles, or the pictures.
4. Your prediction does not have to be right. Good predictions often change as you read more and get new information that does not match your earlier prediction.

## Summarize

Summarizing is a short, quick way of retelling what is most important in a text in your own words. What we determine to be important in a text depends on our purpose for reading it. The ability to determine importance in a text often requires us to evaluate our purpose for reading.

How do I do it?

1. As you read or at the end of a section, stop and recall important information or identify the answer to the question you had before you began reading.
2. Try to distinguish what is important from what is an interesting but significant detail.
3. Look for main ideas or themes that unify the piece of writing.

4. It is also very helpful to highlight key words and phrases and/or make short notes on the margins of the text.

### Synthesize Information

Synthesizing information involves combining new information with existing knowledge to form an original idea, a new line of thinking, or a new creation. Synthesis is the opposite of analysis. Analysis is breaking down something whole into its parts, while synthesizing is putting together separate parts to create a new whole. Synthesizing requires readers to sift and sort through large amounts of information to extract essential ideas and combine these to form or identify the “BIG picture” idea in a given text.

How do I do it?

1. While you are reading, stop and collect your thoughts before reading on.
2. Summarize main ideas about what you have just read by identifying major points.
3. Then combine these main points to develop a larger concept or bigger idea.
4. Synthesizing also involves making judgments and generalizations about what you read.
5. Finally, personalize your reading by integrating the new information you have gained with your previous knowledge or experience to form a new idea, opinion, or perspective.